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ABSTRACT

This paper is directed at describing the informal promotion process utilized in large urban school districts and the effect of in-house selection on minority individuals and women. The sponsor-protege process (the informal promotion process of large urban school districts) and socialization (the psychological dimension of promotion) are discussed. Ethnography was the research methodology used. Results of the study generated information in three areas: (1) a descriptive model of the sponsor-protege process used in promotion; (2) an explanation of the socialization outcome, replication of the protege in the image of the sponsor; and (3) the postulation of hypotheses and corollaries which explain the exclusion of minorities and women from advancement into public school administrative roles. The report supports the premise that equal opportunity of promotion has been replaced with restrictive access to opportunity favoring white males. The proposition was set forth that institutional practices exclude culturally different people from professional advancement, thus rejecting the popularly held misbelief that women and minorities are inadequate in number, ability, and aspiration when seeking promotion. Tables of data and references are included in the report. (Author/MK)

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PROMOTION SOCIALIZATION: THE INFORMAL PROCESS IN LARGE URBAN DISTRICTS AND ITS ADVERSE EFFECTS ON NON-WHITES AND WOMEN

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Abstract

This paper is directed at describing the informal promotion process utilized in large urban school districts and the effect in-house selection has on ethnic/racial individuals and women. Beyond elaboration of the sponsor-protege process, the informal promotion process of large urban school districts, discussion is presented on socialization, the psychological dimension of promotion. Ethnography was the methodology used to uncover both the socialization aspect and the promotion process. The analytical framework used to analyze the qualitative data was the substantive theory approach. Results of the study generate information in three areas: (1) a descriptive model of the sponsor-protege process used in promotion, (2) a detailed explanation of the socialization outcome, replication of the protege in the image of the sponsor, and (3) the postulation of nine hypotheses and corresponding corollaries which explain the exclusion of minorities and women from advancement into public school administrative roles. In general, the research provides findings to reject the concept of promotion based on open competition and individual merit. Rather, the study supports the premise that equal opportunity of promotion has been replaced with restrictive access to opportunity favoring white males. Consequently, the major proposition set forth is that institutional practices exclude culturally different people and women from professional advancement and rejects the popularly held misbelief that women and minorities are inadequate in number, ability, and aspiration when seeking promotion.

PROMOTION SOCIALIZATION: THE INFORMAL PROCESS
IN LARGE URBAN DISTRICTS AND ITS ADVERSE EFFECTS
ON NON-WHITES AND WOMEN[1]

The study reported herein was undertaken in order to explore a bias assumption held by the researcher, not to test the assumption, rather to explore and uncover as much as possible about the belief. The assumption simply stated was: By what means are non-white persons and women excluded from promotion into the administrative sector of a large urban school district? I rejected the idea of proving/disproving the assumption because of the following logic. In essences, the assumption denies the argument that women and ethnic/racial minorities have an equal opportunity when competing for promotion. Individuals who dispute my assumption state that women and minorities do have an equal chance in being promoted but argue that their success rate is hindered by two factors, (1) there are so few in number to compete that statistically their chances are numerically reduced, and (2) those women and minorities that do qualify (possess proper credentials) are not as qualified as white males in experience and other desirable characteristics. According to this logic, these two groups are underrepresented due to their own conditions. However, reported employment figures on women administrators dispells the statistical argument. That is, since the end of World War II, the number of women administrators has been declining. Surveys by the National Association of Elementary School Principals demonstrates that the percentage of women elementary principals decreased by 16% in the 10 year period of 1958-68 (Johnson, 1972). Additionally the American Association of School Administrators stated that women administrators have continued to decline at a rate of 2% per year. (Taylor, 1973). Concomitantly, the two largest non-white populations in the United States, Hispanics and blacks, have been disproportionately

under-represented in the administrative sector of public schools. This lack of upward advancement exist in spite of a disproportionally large pool of ethnic minority teachers (NCES, 1978).

The second argument is qualitative in nature, that is, the merits of candidates are reviewed by evaluators, evaluators who are subject to personal preference and cultural and sexual biases. This second argument exposes the promotional process for what it is: A human activity where one individual judges another individual's ability to perform at a certain level and in a particular, although usually ill-defined, role. Consequently, this half of the argument is based on human interpretation, open to diverent explanation, and thus inconclusive. Thus because of the contradictory statistics and my own understanding of promotion, I accepted the exclusion assumption as reasonable, and proceeded to investigate the question in order to identify and describe how personal preferences, racial, and sexual variables manifested themselves in the promotion process of large urban school districts, resulting in adverse treatment for women and minorities.

Since promotion is defined as a human interactive process, the theoretical constructs used to guide inquiry were socialization and Van Gennep's rites of passage. Hence, this paper will elaborate on the practice of promotion by means of the sponsor-protege model, and the consequences for women and non-white persons in their career advancement. Discussion of these elements will attempt to provide a counter explanation (to the prevailing assumption) as to why there is a paucity of women and minorities in administrative positions. In essence, the paper will help to develop the proposition that institutional practices exclude women and culturally different people from professional advancement and in turn reject the popularly held misbelief that women and minorities are inadequate in

number, ability and aspiration when seeking administrative promotion.

Method

A sociological and anthropological investigative method, ethnography, was utilized for the following three reasons. (1) The research intent was more to discover and describe rather than to prove; (2) it was assumed that the participants (sponsors) were not knowledgeable of the concept of socialization and not fully cognizant of the consequences of their actions; and (3) qualitative data were to be collected.

The substantive theory approach was found to be the best suited for analysis (Glaser and Strauss, 1965). Grounded with an analytical framework, the researcher scrutinizes the qualitative data for the purpose of generating an explanatory and descriptive model or a set of propositional statements amendable to proof in other settings and by other methodologies. The analytical framework consisted primarily of two theoretical constructs: socialization and Van Gennep's "rites of Passage" (1960), both constructs are related to reference group theory.

Subjects

The research was conducted in the Los Angeles Unified School District, specifically in two administrative areas located on the district's eastern boundary. The review of the literature on the topic of inclusion/exclusion into referent groups revealed that sponsorship was a likely means of upward mobility, particularly in professional organizations. Thus, the targeted group to consider as subjects for the study was potential sponsors, which after preliminary discussion with knowledgeable school administrators seemed to be principals. It was concluded by the researcher that experienced principals would be hesitant to acknowledge the extensiveness of

sponsorship and would be unwilling to discuss its mechanics. What was being uncovered, if not challenged, was the district's fairness and objectivity. Secondly, it was thought that addressing the topic directly would not yield major insights or information since the topic to be explored, succession socialization[2], the psychological aspects of sponsorship was not consciously known by the sponsors.

Since the research was to explore the informal promotion process of the district, identification of sponsors based on peer reputation was thought appropriate. From a developed list of sponsors, as identified by their peers, six sponsors were selected to participate in the study. A description of the subjects is provided in Table 1.

Insert Table 1 about here

Procedures

Data collection was conducted by open ended interviews as described by Lutz and Iannaccone (1969). Recording was done by note taking, audio-taping, and transcribing each interview session. The open ended interview technique permits obtaining systematic data about the range of perceptions a particular group (sponsors) have regarding persons (proteges) and events (training). The interview is given direction by the interviewer, and the interviewee is permitted the freedom to expand the preameters of the question to whatever radius believed appropriate. The interviewer, during the interview, formulates the questions from both the responses given and the predetermined overall focus in order to extract the information believed to be related to the investigation. Specifically, with this study, three major a priori topics were developed for investigation by the researcher as a result of reviewing the related literature: (1) background

Table 1

Sponsors Interviewed

Sponsor	Sex	Ethnicity	Years as Administrator	Number of Persons Advanced[a]
A	M	Chicano	16	Unknown
B	M	Anglo	12	14
C	M	Anglo	17	15
D	M	Anglo	22	21
E	F	Anglo	17	21
F	M	Anglo	17	30

[a] From teacher to Vice-Principal

of the sponsor's career, (2) detail about the sponsor-protege process, and (3) identification and discussion of inclusive/exclusive variables.

Analysis Approach

The method of analysis adopted, substantive theory approach, in operational terms means categorizing and classifying events, units, people, groups, and relationships. By continually reading the transcripts, examining the literature, and associating the constructs, the data were brought into definition. As a result of analysis by successive refinement, hypotheses were formulated which gave meaning to the exclusion phenomenon.

Results

The findings are of two types: Description of the informal promotion socialization process of a large urban school district and the adverse consequences this process has on minorities and women. The latter type of findings will be presented in the form of hypotheses and corollaries.

Sponsorship

The promotion of individuals in large school districts is mainly the result of the informal process commonly referred to as sponsorship. Sponsorship is more prevalent in large districts because of the size factor. That is, big school districts have an inherent factor of possessing a large pool of teachers to draw from for advancement. An internal pool of candidates creates a "closed shop". A close shop usually dictates having insiders control most of the practices, including promotion. Insiders who control the promotion process the most are principals. The principalship is the key organizational position within the district and of the sponsorship model. The principal's position provides two vital resources necessary for sponsors to operate: (1) it places at the sponsor's disposal official

power to grant training experiences to persons within the school, and (2) it gives the principal access to central office personnel and information as well as other external contacts. In short, the principal is centered between the pool of teachers seeking advancement and significant others who determine entrance.

Thus, every administrator holding a principalship has the necessary ingredients to be a sponsor but not all are. Sponsorship can be explained as a significant other, herein an administrator, providing services to a few favorites. It is a network based on social relationships and personal commitments. A sponsor's request is fulfilled by another based on past interaction with the asked person. The response a sponsor elicits is usually determined by his professional and social reputation which in turn are the results of seniority and previous contacts.

A sponsor's functions are divided between in-school support and district-wide assistance, both are interconnected and overlapping, but some are separate. There are four basic functions that the sponsor provides to proteges--exposure, advice, protection and sanction. Visibility is acquired by placement in leadership roles (committees, projects), and while the protege is in these roles or experiences, the sponsor is counseling the person. Protection is mostly preventive, that is, not allowing the protege to do or say anything that may harm the individual's chances of advancing into administration. In short, protection is centered on not antagonizing any superiors. By sanction, it is meant the sponsor must ratify the protege through the district's formal promotion procedures. Sanction by the sponsor takes the form of providing written ratings and references required by the district. Since sponsorship is founded on favoritism not competition, and selection for favoritism is based on

likeness not on professional capabilities, so too, advancement is based on acceptance not merit nor previous achievement. Thus, advice and protection are vital functions the sponsor must provide.

By developing the flow of the sponsor-protege model, additional insight to the sponsor's functions will be made apparent along with a fuller understanding of the sequence involved. The best way of constructing the sponsorship mode is to follow the necessary steps taken by the sponsor to incorporate a protege into the administrative quarter. Essentially the order of sequence is identification, announcement, adoption, training and advancement. (See Figure 1)

Insert Figure 1 Here

Identification refers to the sponsor's initial spotting of a potential candidate for adoption as a protege. Basically identification entrails two efforts by the sponsor, one is subconscious, the other conscious. A sponsor identifies a possible candidate for adoption on the foundation of subconscious criteria. Unknowingly attention to possible candidates is attracted by qualities candidates have which are similar if not the same as the sponsor's qualities. Following this subconscious identifying, the sponsor proceeds to overtly identify candidates based on professional criteria, which are the same as the sponsor's administrative strengths. This second conscious identification act serves the purpose of rationalizing the subconscious spotting. The identification stage is the first step of the socialization process, ultimately resulting in replication. By replication it is meant that a sponsor by means of the sponsorship mode produces administrators in one's own likeness. Consequently, sponsorship, the informal means of succession, is the operational avenue for socialization.

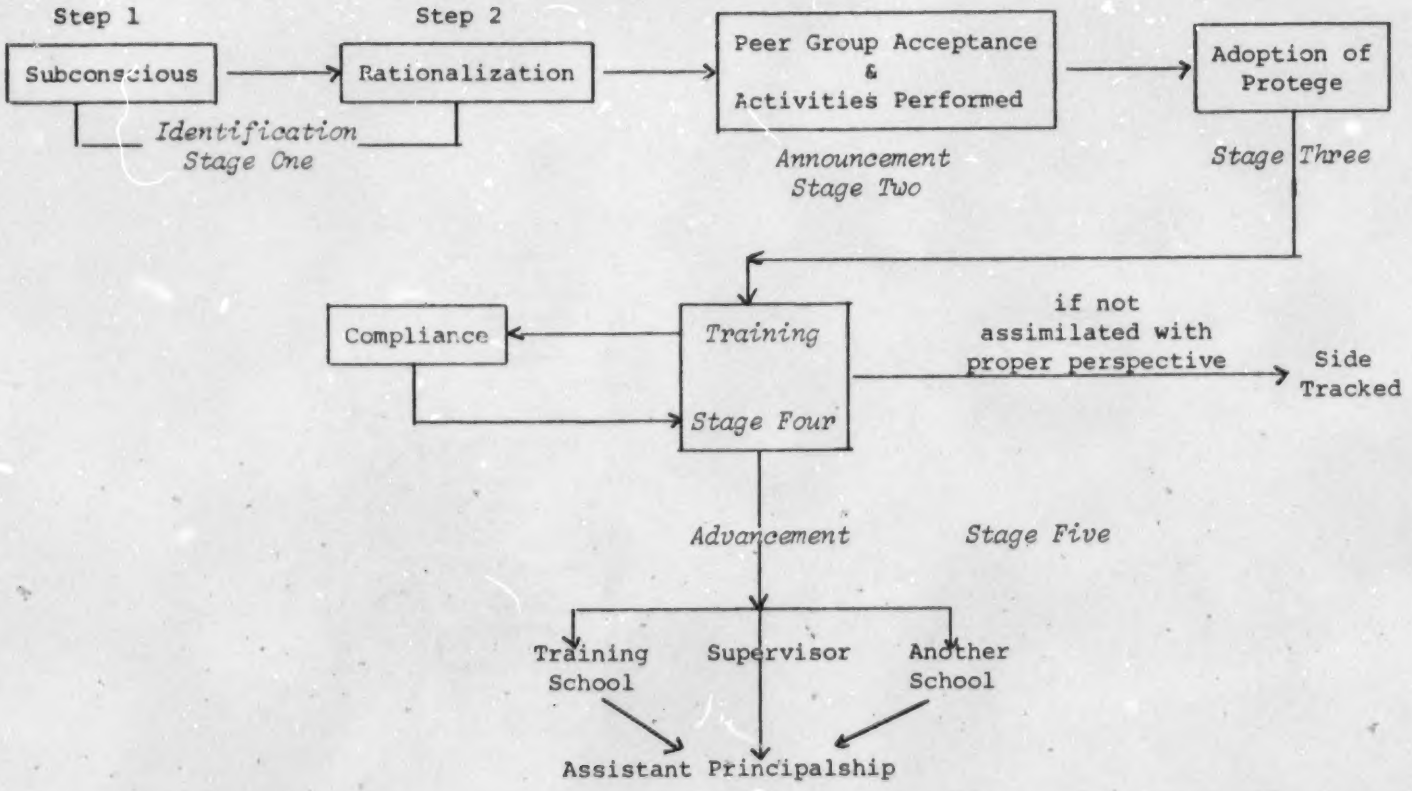

Figure 1: Sponsorship Mode

There is an intermediate and overlapping stage between identification and adoption which I have labeled announcement. Announcement refers to the action taken by the teacher to declare interest in becoming an administrator. At this time, the teacher becomes a candidate but not yet a protege of anyone. Candidacy is declared in one of two ways: Expressing one's intention to the principal or undertaking voluntarily extra-curricular activities. The latter way appears to be the most effective and also has been identified occurring in the New York public school system under the term of GASing as labeled by Daniel Griffiths and colleagues (1963). GASing is the process of Getting the Attention of one's Superior in the hopes of securing a sponsor. Moreover, GASing is important for a sponsor, since it allows the potential protege to prove willingness and acceptability. Willingness, equated to commitment, provides the sponsor to gauge the protege's receptiveness to the sponsor's control. Acceptability is the degree a candidate is received by peers. Identification and announcement culminate in adoption of a limited number of candidates, usually one or two, as proteges. Unsponsored candidates are sidetracked, discouraged or allowed to proceed without support.

With the adoption of a candidate as a protege, the training phase begins. Activities assigned to the protege by the principal are not measured in terms of knowledge or skills learned, but rather the value of the activities is assessed by the amount of exposure the protege receives with significant others. The importance of the training is the amount of access the protege will have with administrators. Training activities are directed at acquiring acceptance first, and skill second. In regards to socialization, excessive contact with significant others for the objective of acceptance dictates that the protege's behavior be pleasing, agreeing

and conforming. Consequently, the protege's apprenticeship results in codified behavior that mirrors the administrative reference group he/she is attempting to enter.

As for succession, the more activities a protege accumulates the better the possibility of successfully passing the promotion examination. The district examination revolves around training experiences and ratings. The protege will be assured of receiving excellent ratings by significant administrators provided compliance to their norms is demonstrated.

The final stage of the informal promotion stream is advancement. Because lengthy service within the district and numerous, varied experiences are honored for promotion, the sponsor's closing function is to move the protege into one of three positions: a teacher in a training school, a teacher in another school, or an instructional supervisor assigned to several schools. In the past, the most valuable assignment was to a training school. Teachers in a training school would demonstrate the latest teaching techniques for observation by principals, consequently, providing invaluable exposure. With the infusion of federal funds into big urban school districts, a large number of positions with administrative duties have come about. These quasi-administrative roles have lessened the importance of the training school assignment. The instructional supervisor's roles provides equally the same type of resources to the protege as the training school and quasi-administrative federal project position. The third option, transfer to another school, is the least desirable because it takes longer for the protege to enter administration. Selection of another school is grounded on two indices. One, the school must provide a different setting so the candidate appears to have the quality of adaptability. Two, the receiving principal must be willing to continue the protege through training.

Summarizing, promotion in big school districts is via succession. Succession is operationalized by means of sponsorship. The sponsor-protege process fosters socialization of proteges.

Socialization

Replication of the protege into the mold of the sponsor is the product of succession socialization. Specifically, succession socialization produces replication by four means: Identifying a candidate in one's own image, duplicating the sponsor's training experience on the protege, shaping a protege's administrative perspective to resemble the sponsor's, and controlling by compliance.

Identification of a candidate and training have already been discussed in the preceeding section on sponsorship, therefore, elaboration in this section will be only to stress important elements. A sponsor initially identifies a person as a potential protege on the basis of traits the individual may display which are closely related to the sponsor's own traits. This early identification is subconscious. To substantiate subconscious attraction, Wilbert E. Moore (1969) writes that much of the selectivity practiced within the educational system is informal and unconscious. The implication, he hypothesizes, is that normative internalization takes place only in situations marked by strong affectivity in relationships. Thus the closer the protege matches the sponsor, the stronger the relationship to be developed. Becker and Strauss (1956) also lend support for the subconscious identification. They state that recruitment is begun in advance of selection. Their state of recruitment can be equated with the first stage of identification. They further state that organizations establish ways of systematically restricting the pool of candidates for advancement. One established way is based on the use of personality assessments. Their

premise is not so much in support of the subconscious act of identification as it is for identification on the basis of personal qualities.

The conscious identification by a sponsor of a candidate is based upon the professional criteria that are reflective of the sponsor's administrative skills. The identification on the basis of mirrored strengths is rationalized in two ways: First, the criteria is what a sponsor perceives as making him successful and secondly, the qualities are essential if an administrator is to function adequately.

The relationship between the identification process with the socialization process is best made apparent when reading Edgar Schein's definition of socialization:

> [Socialization], is the process by which a new member learns the value system, the norms, and the required behavior patterns of the society, organization, or group which he is entering. (p. 606)

Since the protege will be learning most of the values, norms, and behavior patterns of the administrative group from the sponsor, it becomes vital that a close relationship be established. The practice of identifying a protege in the image of the sponsor helps the protege internalize the norms and behavior patterns of the sponsor. The implication of selection based on duplication is that proteges will be very receptive to suggestions and information given by the sponsor.

During training the sponsor provides to the protege cognitive information and supervision. It is these two elements that develop for the protege as administrative perspective which guides the protege's practice as an administrator. It is in the training phase that the protege loses the teacher point of view and acquires an administrative understanding. The training stage is probably the most powerful agent in transforming the protege into the likeness of his administrative reference group. Shaping

a person's thoughts and behavior in the likeness of ruling administrators, particulary the sponsor, is accomplished by having the protege undergo a routine of experiences that are similar to the experiences the sponsor underwent when vying for administration. Successfulness, familiarity, and purpose are possible reasons why a sponsor trains the protege in the manner that he underwent. If the sponsor's training was successful in getting him into administration, then it only follows that such training should be worthwhile for the protege. Sponsors are most familiar with the training routine they underwent as proteges, and most people operate from what they know. Since the purpose of training has been found to be the acquisition of acceptance rather then skill, duplicate training experiences are directed to shaping the proper administrative perspective.

Becker, Geer, Hughes and Strauss (1961) define perspective as a coordinated set of ideas which a person uses to deal with various situations. In this study, administrative perspective came to mean the norms, values and attitudes inculcated into the protege by the sponsor through cognitive information and activities during training in order that the protege behave in a certain fashion as an administrator. From an organizational viewpoint, aspirants acquiring a certain administrative perspective provides a useful function. Every organization has means of integrating individuals into positions for the purpose of reinforcing established patterns, thus causing minimal drift away from expectation and norms. Since the sponsor is coaching to form an administrative perspective to be adopted by the protege which is similar to the sponsor's perspective and consistent with the organization's, unacceptable behavior and inappropriate attitudes by the aspiring administrative candidate is diminished greatly.

The protege acquiring the proper administrative perspective is foremost

since it determines acceptance by the administrative reference group. Readiness for advancement is singled by the protege when behavior and pronouncements reflect the sponsor's viewpoint.

The question now arises, why should a protege allow his values, attitudes, norms, or way of behavior to be changed? Or stating it from the sponsor's side, what is at the sponsor's disposal that permits major control over the protege's belief and behavior? From the candidate's angle, it becomes apparent that continuation of administrative training is determined on the correctness of responses (both in words and actions) to certain situations. The sponsor evaluates the protege's performance based on the information received from teachers and others, and the relayed information is interpreted under the sponsor's administrative perspective. Moreover, the protege realizes that ultimately entrance into administration will be dependent upon the ratings and references written by the sponsor. From the sponsor's vantage point, proteges are selected based on their willingness to cooperate and receptiveness to suggestions. The principal has discretionary right to grant opportunities which are necessary for the candidate's training and experience. Also, the sponsor as principal is in a position to formally evaluate the protege as a candidate seeking promotion through district procedures. Therefore, the sponsorship mode has access to informal and formal compliance.

Exclusion of Minorities and Women

In reporting succession socialization, the discussion to this point has been focused on one outcome, inclusion. Remaining to be presented are the consequences that in-house and informal promotion have for aspiring culturally different persons and women. To state that certain ethnic/racial groups and women have not been promoted based on lack of sponsorship

is inadequate. Hence, hypotheses and corollaries have been formulated to help explain why culturally different persons and women have not been sponsored. Since the hypotheses and corollaries are self-explanatory, no discussion will be provided.

Hypothesis 1: If a person does not have personal qualities that are reflective of a sponsor, then the teacher will not be subconsciously identified for sponsorship.

Corollary 1A: Since ethnic minorities and women are perceived by white males (sponsors) to have some defective personal qualities, they are not subsconsciously identified.

Hypothesis 2: If a person does not display professional abilities that mirror the sponsor's, then the sponsor will not identify the person for support.

Corollary 2A: Since the identification phase is linear and minorities are rarely subconsciously noticed, abilities of minorities and women are not noticed.

Hypothesis 3: If the district is not seeking a particular type of administrator, then there will be no conscious effort made to identify said type.

Corollary 3A: When the district is committed to promoting minorities and women for a particular position, then recruitment and selection of such persons is successful.

Hypothesis 4: If a person is not sponsored, then treatment received will be less favorable than that given to a protege.

Corollary 4A: Since minorities and women are usually unsponsored, their treatment is less favorable than others.

Hypothesis 5: The degree of acculturation by an ethnic/racial individual

prior to organizational socialization is proportional to the probability of gaining sponsorship.

Hypothesis 6: If a person does not overtly express a desire to become an administrator, then the chances of being selected are greatly diminished.

Corollary 6A: Minorities and women believe that performing their assigned role very well is sufficient evidence for being identified; therefore, they do not express their interest in becoming an administrator.

Hypothesis 7: If a person does not receive peer approval while GASing, then the sponsor will not initiate adoption.

Corollary 7A: Since peer recognition for minorities and women in leadership roles is difficult to acquire, sponsors will not affirmatively seek out minorities for adoption.

Hypothesis 8: If a protege's administrative perspective does not conform to the sponsor's, then the aspirant will not be given further support.

Corollary 8A: Culturally different persons and women already having to modify their identity because of societal prejudices generally resist further identity change; therefore, continued sponsorship will be terminated.

Hypothesis 9: If a person has not completely internalized the reference group's norms, but the perspective is compatible, then advancement into an administrative position will be delayed.

Corally 9A: Since the culturally diverse candidate and woman begin with norms that are different, apprenticeship will last longer causing some minorities and women candidates to side-track

themselves into other non-administrative but related areas, such as, supervision.

Summary

The hypotheses and corallaries reveal that the probability of non-white persons and women to be identified and selected for sponsorship are lopsided in favor of exclusion. Plus, if adopted, there are multiple key exit points which minorities and women are likely to pass from favor. Sponsorship is structured to admit only a few homogeneous types. Of major importance is that minorities and women are excluded from advancing, not on the basis of competencies, but on the basis of their deviation from white male norms. Since most sponsors are white males, there is a lack of understanding and appreciation for non-white persons and women. Furthermore, the few minorities and women who are sponsored are fairly well acculturated and the successive socialization process melts down any deviant qualities or brings about conformity.

Footnotes

1. This paper is an abbreviated report of a study written by the author, Succession Socialization: Its Influence on School Administrative Candidates and Its Implication to the Exclusion of Minorities From Administration, ERIC Ed. 093 052. The research was supported by a grant from the National Institute of Education.

2. Succession socialization is a term created by the researcher in order to distinguish it from the other already identified socialization concepts of anticipatory, occupational, professional and organizational. Succession socialization is only concerned with a candidate whose movement within an organization is a promotion and with the necessary learning the person is subject to prior to formal acceptance into a referent group.

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